



June 14, 2021

Contents

Employee Spotlight.....	1
Mike Downey, David Powell and Burn Crew– Job Well Done!.....	1
Action Request	2
New Training: DHRM-The Road to Cultural Competence	2
2021 State of the Forest Report	2
Employee News	2
Welcome to VDOF!	2
News You Can Use	2
Loblolly vs Shortleaf Pine and Yellow-Poplar Reports	2
Last Week.....	3
State Forester	3
Forestland Conservation.....	3
Forest Resource Management	3
Agency Lands	4
State Forest.....	4
Central Region	5
Western Region	5
Public Information	5
News Clips.....	6

Employee Spotlight

Mike Downey, David Powell and Burn Crew– Job Well Done!

- ◆ USDA-Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) Acting District Conservationist Matt Carroll shared the below message with VDOF in reference to a prescribed burn and wildlife project on the Goodwin property.
 - “Hope y’all are doing well. I just wanted to take a few minutes and write a quick note about the value of partnerships and how well they are working together. I mostly want to give a shout out to Mike Downey, David, and their burn crew.

We have been working with a landowner on a unique tract/site that wanted to improve quail habitat for a few years.

Mike has been great to communicate with about this project, size it up and when the time was right implemented the burn methodically and safely.

Virginia Department Wildlife Resources (VDWR) Marc Puckett visited this tract this week and loved what he saw. A huge part of this is VDOF being a leader in getting prescribed fire on private lands.”

Action Request

New Training: DHRM-The Road to Cultural Competence

- ❑ The Department of Human Resource Management (DHRM) has launched an online module on Diversity, Equity, Inclusion, and Cultural Competence. This training is the first step toward pursuing the professional learning goals outlined in the *One Virginia* Plan. It’s also in accordance with new laws passed this year. The module is entitled “The Road to Cultural Competence,” and serves as an introductory session for state employees as they begin to enhance and develop their knowledge in the vital areas of Diversity, Equity and Inclusion.
- ❑ To access the “DHRM-The Road to Cultural Competence Training”:
 - Login to the COVLC at: <https://covlc.virginia.gov/Default.aspx>
 - Type in the search box “The Road to Cultural Competence”
 - Select “DHRM-The Road to Cultural Competence”
 - Select-Open Item
- ❑ This training is strongly encouraged and should be completed by: **July 12, 2021**
- ❑ If you have any issues accessing the training please contact Kristi Clore at kristina.clore@dof.virginia or (434)220-9029.

2021 State of the Forest Report

- ❑ The 2020 State of the Forest Report is an achievement we can all be proud of. Each year the report highlights many of our outstanding accomplishments and current data to tell the story of forests and forestry in Virginia. Each of us plays a role in that story and has a part to tell. Public Information invites you to share your successes and ideas for the 2021 State of the Forest throughout the year. Have you received a letter or email from a landowner recognizing your hard work or the efforts of one of your staff? Maybe a project you've worked on has yielded interesting results or data. Let's not forget photographs of projects and events. These are the kinds of things that make our story compelling. When you have an idea, a story, photos or data to share for next year's State of the Forest, please let us know. It's as easy as sending an email to publicinfo@dof.virginia.gov.

Employee News

Welcome to VDOF!

- ◆ Rebecca Barkman and Olivia Madigan began their internship at the Matthews State Forest on June 1. Both are juniors in the College of Natural Resources and Environment at Virginia Tech. This is the 12th year of the internship program which is a partnership with Virginia Tech and the Matthews Foundation. Rebecca and Olivia will be working to help with the management of the Matthews and other area State Forests.

News You Can Use

Loblolly vs Shortleaf Pine and Yellow-Poplar Reports

- ◆ The new VDOF website contains a full archive of all VDOF research reports, found under the "Resource Library" page. From the beginning of the program, growth and yield of pine and hardwood trees has

been an important subject. In 1955, the first two reports dealt with the yields of loblolly vs shortleaf pine (<https://dof.virginia.gov/wp-content/uploads/report-0001.pdf>) and yellow-poplar (<https://dof.virginia.gov/wp-content/uploads/report-0002.pdf>).

Last Week

State Forester

- ◆ The VDOF executive team held an initial meeting with the contractor that will be performing the assessment of the IFRIS database system to share overall agency objectives. It was made clear that while the agency has significant history with IFRIS and has integrated many agency functions into it, the assessment should consider all options for moving forward.
- ◆ Rob Farrell participated in the Virginia Fire Services Board meeting as well as the Fire Control and Prevention subcommittee meeting.

Forestland Conservation

- ◆ Rachel Harris (utilization and marketing specialist) and Joe Lehnert (urban wood utilization forester) have become participants in the Virginia Ag Animal Disaster Carbon Task Force. This group is composed of Virginia Cooperative Extension, Virginia Department of Agricultural and Consumer Services (VDACS) and Department of Environmental Quality (DEQ). Their role is to identify sources of carbon, such as shavings, sawdust and mulch, which are used to compost dead farm animals. Rachel and Joe met with the group, which included representatives from North Carolina Department of Agriculture and the North Carolina Forest Service. The goal was to learn from the North Carolina representatives and to begin developing Virginia strategies to respond to massive agriculture animal mortality events due to hurricanes or animal disease epidemics. Within less than a day, Rachel and Joe were able to supply a spreadsheet to the Virginia agriculture folks containing companies, contact info, locations and products. The Virginia agriculture agencies will be determining the next steps in this planning process. We are uncertain at this time of the level of further VDOF involvement, until a large agriculture animal mortality event occurs.
- ◆ Terry Lasher (assistant state forester) represented the VDOF at the Chesapeake Bay Principals Staff Committee meeting. The meeting consisted of the approval of the Executive Council's Directive on climate change, program budget discussion, approval of a plan for the assessment of Chesapeake Bay monitoring and funding, an update of the Conowingo Dam WIP and financial strategy, as well as an update on the committee's *Diversity, Equity, Inclusion and Justice* (DEIJ) Implementation Plan.

Forest Resource Management

- ◆ Lori Chamberlin (forest health program manager), and Katlin DeWitt (forest health specialist) visited Mountain Lake in Giles County to survey fall cankerworm damage. A fall cankerworm outbreak occurred at this location in 2018-2020, causing significant tree defoliation. The cankerworm population appears to have crashed this year, but the damage from previous years is still present. Forest health staff will return later this summer to measure and record tree mortality.
- ◆ VDOF Forest Inventory & Analysis (FIA) crews have completed and transmitted 60 percent of the inventory plots in the current panel of work as of June 1. (FIA staff had completed 55 percent as of May 1). The monthly production has been impacted by the U.S. Forest Service data transmission website, which was down at the end of May.

- ◆ FIA staff began data collection on the “P2+” plots to be done in summer of 2021. This subset of FIA plots have additional measurements, such as down woody material for forest fuel loading and carbon sequestration estimation as well as understory vegetation estimation.
- ◆ The Southern Group of State Foresters (SGSF) is an organization of the 13 southern forestry agencies, Puerto Rico and the Virgin Islands, with the mission of providing leadership in addressing common issues and challenges. The Forest Management Committee (FMC) of the SGSF consists of agency leads in this area. Dean Cumbia (forest resource management director) attended the virtual summer meeting of the FMC on May 27. Major issues discussed included uniformity in storm damage assessment, updates from the U. S. Forest Service (state and private forestry), national policy, budget, and legislative updates, forestry and the Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS), and forest carbon. Additionally, each state shared highlights, including staffing, state assistance programs, hurricane block grants, and interaction with USDA agencies.

Agency Lands

- ◆ Josh McLaughlin (assistant nursery manager) met with members of The Nature Conservancy (TNC) and the Department of Conservation and Recreation (DCR) at Chub Sandhill. Those in attendance were Bobby Clontz, Brian Van Eerden from TNC, and Rebecca Wilson and Darren Loomis from DCR. A representative from The Longleaf Alliance from Charleston, South Carolina also attended. The group discussed future funding of native longleaf production, particularly cone collection. They decided to treat the 17 acres at South Quay for cone and seed insects and to meet with other agencies in July.
- ◆ Jerre Creighton (research program manager), Dean Cumbia, and Joe Rossetti (senior area forester) attended a visit with logger Wyatt Lattimer in Fauquier County to discuss his approaches to oak regeneration silviculture and lumber marketing. His business model is intriguing, but his capacity is only 100-150 acres per year of "management", so it's hard to see it becoming a very widespread solution.
- ◆ Jim Schroering (longleaf/SPB prevention coordinator) continues to work on matters related to longleaf pine: conducting a cone survey in anticipation of upcoming contracted spray work for cone and seed insects at South Quay, assessing germination in the container crop at GGFC, and performing weed control in the seed orchard at New Kent.
- ◆ Ones Bitoki (tree improvement forester) represented VDOF on the North Carolina State Cooperative Tree Improvement Program's executive committee discussion of the 2021-2022 budget and a proposed amendment to the coop's operating procedures. He then participated in the full annual advisory meeting. The group discussed and approved the budget for the coming year. They also discussed progress of the 5th cycle of loblolly pine breeding and potential tests to be established next fall/winter. There was interest by several co-op members to come up with PRS-like data sheets (i.e. describing the genetic gains in productivity, disease resistance, and/or stem quality) for longleaf pine. The North Carolina State University (NCSU) staff will explore the idea with input from co-op members who are engaged in longleaf seedling and orchard business.

State Forest

- ◆ Shannon Lewis (forest management specialist) worked with new State Forest personnel Jack Kauffman and Kirby Woolfolk (forest management specialists), covering topics such as timber sales, logging and receipts for per unit sales, GIS & GPS use & needs, and weekly reports. They also looked at a stand in unit 23 on the Cumberland State Forest for potential thinning needs.
- ◆ Kirby Woolfolk received a tour of the Prince Edward - Gallion State Forest from Mike Womack (forest management specialist) and looked at upcoming issues to address, such as trail maintenance, kudzu control, and needed road maintenance and culvert work.

Central Region

- ◆ The Shenandoah Work Area released American chestnut trees that were planted at the Devils Backbone State Forest 18 years ago (by Joe Lehnen). Nearby trees that were competing with the canopy of the chestnuts or encroaching on the stump sprouts were felled to help perpetuate stump sprouting into the future.
- ◆ Ashley Mock (bay watershed specialist) and Matt Wolanski (senior area forester) coordinated several riparian buffer maintenance volunteer events with Friends of the North Fork of the Shenandoah River. The two buffer projects (18 acres and 7 acres) were the first iteration of a broader volunteer buffer maintenance program, focused on the first few years of tree establishment.
- ◆ Jordan Herring (senior area forester) led a virtual workshop on invasive species for residents of Purcellville. The presentation touched on common invasive species in the area, different methods of control, funding opportunities, and educated the residents on why they should plant native plants in their own landscapes. This was one of four virtual workshops Jordan has led for the town to encourage landowners to complete natural resource management projects on their own properties.
- ◆ Joe Rossetti, Sean Murray (summer intern), Dean Cumbia, and Jerre Creighton visited a 5-year old planted riparian buffer to assess its success and long term viability. Sean is working on a summer project to see if the changed planting standards in 2015 have improved survival and success in the northern Piedmont and northern valley.

Western Region

- ◆ Members of the Forest Reapers Steering Committee for McCormick Farm, along with the VDOF Forest Health staff and Mountain Valley work area staff, met at McCormick Farm in Augusta/Rockbridge County to treat ash trees for emerald ash borer (EAB). A total of 15 trees along the farm's Marl Creek Trail were treated, including a beautiful 29-inch DBH tree located in a forested setting. The Forest Reapers include VDOF staff, Virginia Cooperative Extension staff, and volunteers/foresters who work together to develop and carry out forest management activities and educational programs at McCormick Farm, a Virginia Tech Agriculture Research & Extension Center (AREC) in Raphine. This work is part of VDOF's Emerald Ash Borer (EAB) Program, which aims to treat and protect ash on state lands. These particular ash trees were first treated in 2018 and 2019, and will be re-treated every 2-3 years.
- ◆ Five recently hired area foresters and forest technicians received a day long water quality training in Floyd and Patrick Counties. Two water quality audits were performed and an active harvest with a culvert crossing was inspected. New personnel were given audit questionnaires to review and complete, while Andrew Vinson and Stuart Sours (water quality specialists) reviewed the Water Quality auditing process. Water Quality calibration was an integral part of the training session and will help to ensure consistency in field inspection procedures, as well as ensure problem areas are referred to our Water Quality staff for review and recommendations.
- ◆ Ed Zimmer (deputy state forester) and Chris Thomsen (regional forester) attended the Southwest Council Connections & Agritourism Dinner hosted by The Virginia Agribusiness Council and Al and Nancy Hammond. The event took place on the Hammond's Glenburn Farms in Roanoke County and was attended by 50+ producers, legislators, and ag/forestry agency representatives.

Public Information

- ◆ Michelle Stoll (public information director) attended the initial Environment Virginia steering committee planning meeting for the 2022 conference. The committee discussed broad categories for next year's proposals.

- ◆ Ellen Powell (conservation education coordinator) gave a Project Learning Tree (PLT) update at the SFI State Implementation Committee meeting. PLT at the national level is now a program of SFI, and Virginia's SIC is supportive of our state program.

News Clips

- ◆ [Policymakers are banking on trees to cut carbon. Forest experts say Virginia needs more seedlings.](#)
- ◆ [SWCD, State Forestry Agency Team Up to Make Every Tree Count](#)
- ◆ [There is never shortage of lumber, there is just shortage of lumber at cheap prices](#)
- ◆ [Virginia pledges to reduce polluted runoff from state lands as part of Chesapeake Bay cleanup](#)
- ◆ [3 Reasons Companies Are Investing In Forest Conservation And Restoration, And How They Do It](#)
- ◆ [The world's tallest known tropical tree has been found—and climbed](#)